

**IMPROVED TILE-, FLOOR TILE- OR SIMILAR-TYPE CERAMIC PIECE**

**RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] The present application is a Continuation of co-pending PCT Application No. PCT/ES02/00361, filed July 17, 2002, which in turn, claims priority from Spanish Application Serial No. 200101861, filed July 19, 2001. Applicants claim the benefits of 35 U.S.C. §120 as to the PCT application and priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 as to said Spanish application, and the entire disclosures of both applications are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

**OBJECT OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] The present invention refers to a ceramic piece, wall tile, floor tile or similar, improved, the main purpose of which consists of providing a novel ceramic piece for paving and surfacing which presents a configuration for which important improvements can be obtained at the aesthetic level. This configuration is obtained by means of some tongue-and-groove projections and depressions in the sides of the piece which are adapted to the corresponding decorative motif and which break the continuity of the line of the grid formed by a plurality of pieces, thus making it difficult to distinguish those lines and permitting ornamentations which could not be achieved with conventional quadrangular pieces.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] Ceramic pieces, wall tiles, floor tiles or similar are known that are arranged contiguously in rows and columns by way of a grid. These conventional pieces for paving and surfacing present relative drawbacks in that

they leave the lines produced when the pieces are laid next to each other very visible, since they are all completely quadrangular and, once they have been laid in position, a kind of grid can be clearly seen, corresponding to the areas where the pieces join. Since they are all straight, these grid lines aesthetically spoil the continuity of a decorative motif and lessen the impact of the ornamentation effect, whether this be geometric, or one of imitation of marble shapes, imitation of natural stone or others.

[0004] There are also known some tiles having a non-square contour such as those shown in the U.S. design 57111. However, the contour of said tiles is not adapted to to a corresponding decorative motif, nor enable ornamentations in sets of pieces with a non-grid structure.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

[0005] In order to achieve the objectives and avoid the drawbacks stated in the above paragraphs, the invention consists of an improved ceramic piece, wall tile, floor tile or similar, of the type that is arranged in contiguous rows and columns in the manner of a grid.

[0006] As a novelty, according to the invention, the said piece presents certain tongued-and-grooved projections and depressions in its sides adapted to the corresponding decorative motif that breaks the continuity in the lines of that grid, thereby making it difficult to distinguish said lines and enabling the possibility of ornamentations of sets of pieces with a non-grid structure.

[0007] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, these projections and depressions present a trapezoid shape, with one projection being included in the centre of one of the

sides of the piece, another projection in the centre of the opposite side, a depression in the centre of another side of the piece and a further depression in the centre of the side opposite to this latter. Nevertheless, in other embodiments, the shape of these projections and depressions can vary, always provided that the characteristics of their being easily slotted together and that they adequately break the continuity of the lines of join between the pieces are maintained.

[0008] With the configuration that has been described, the advantage of the piece of the invention consists of the fact that it makes possible some much better aesthetic effects in the corresponding pavements or wall surfacings.

[0009] Below, in order to facilitate a better understanding of this description and forming an integral part thereof, some figures are included in which the object of the invention has been represented as described by the appended claims by way of illustration, and not to be regarded as limiting.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES**

[0010] Figure 1 represents a plan view of a ceramic piece produced according to the present invention.

[0011] Figure 2 represents a plan view of various pieces of the type referred to in figure 1 above, showing their application to an ornamentation imitating pieces of natural stone.

[0012] Figure 3 represents a plan view of an arrangement of pieces of the type referred to in figure 1 above, showing an application to a parquet.

[0013] Figure 4 represents a plan view of a plurality of pieces of the type referred to in figure 1 above, showing an application in which the ornamentation imitates a mosaic with pieces of different geometric shapes.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF AN EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION**

[0014] A description of an example of the invention making reference to the numbering adopted in the figures will now be made.

[0015] So, the improved ceramic piece of this example of embodiment consists of an essentially quadrangular piece 1 of the type of a tile or similar, though with the particular feature that its four sides present respective projections 2 and depressions 3, as can be seen in figure 1.

[0016] In this example, the projections 2 and the depressions 3 are trapezoid and are arranged in such a manner that one of the projections 2 is in the centre of one of the sides of piece 1, another projection 2 is on the side opposite to the previous one, one depression 3 in the centre of another side of the piece 1, and the remaining side presents a depression 3 similar to the previous one. This configuration determines that the various pieces 1 can be easily slotted together, since the projections 2 correspond perfectly to the depressions 3. Moreover, when various pieces 1 are laid in rows and columns, the corresponding grid lines corresponding to the joins between pieces become broken up due to the projections 2 and the depressions 3, making it difficult to see them.

[0017] Moreover, if the projections 2 and depressions 3

are adapted to the ornamentation of the pieces, as can be seen in figures 2, 3 and 4, the decoration provided by the pieces 1 will have an excellent aesthetic appearance, as can be appreciated in the said figures 2, 3 and 4.

**[0018]** So, it may be seen in figure 2 an application representing pieces of natural stone, giving a sensation of irregularity that is impossible to obtain with conventional quadrangular pieces.

**[0019]** Figure 3 shows an application to parquet in which the strips of wood seem to represent a complex arrangement with an attractive appearance, and it looks as though strips of very different sizes and shapes have been used when in fact just the pieces of this example have been used, all of them equal.

**[0020]** It may be seen in figure 4 an application to an ornamentation which resembles a mosaic in which the pieces used are large octagonal pieces, some smaller hexagonal pieces and other pentagonal pieces, also small, when in fact only the pieces like those of figure 1 have been used, all of them equal.